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ABSTRACT

Schools which have many children who, because of the environment in which they grow up, find it difficult to keep pace and therefore often get left behind, are now being given a boost. Extra attention and, if necessary, extra money will be given to the schools where these children are in the majority. An interdepartmental Educational Development Steering Group is responsible for organizing activities and insuring that policy is carried out. A start was made in 1974 on implementing the policy and building on on-going activities. The result of this in the school year 1976-1977 will be that 1400 to 1500 primary schools from a total of 8500 primary schools, and 400 nursery schools from a total of 7300 nursery schools will have extra full-time or part-time teachers. More than half of these schools with extra teachers (priority schools) are supported by the school support centers. The 18 support centers involved in this work were allocated 32 extra members of staff--mainly to set up, work out, and implement the development packages. Five regions, the town of Groningen, the eastern mining region in the province of Limburg, southeast Drenthe, Helmond, and the Hague, have already been designated as development project areas. (Author)

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educational development policy in the Netherlands

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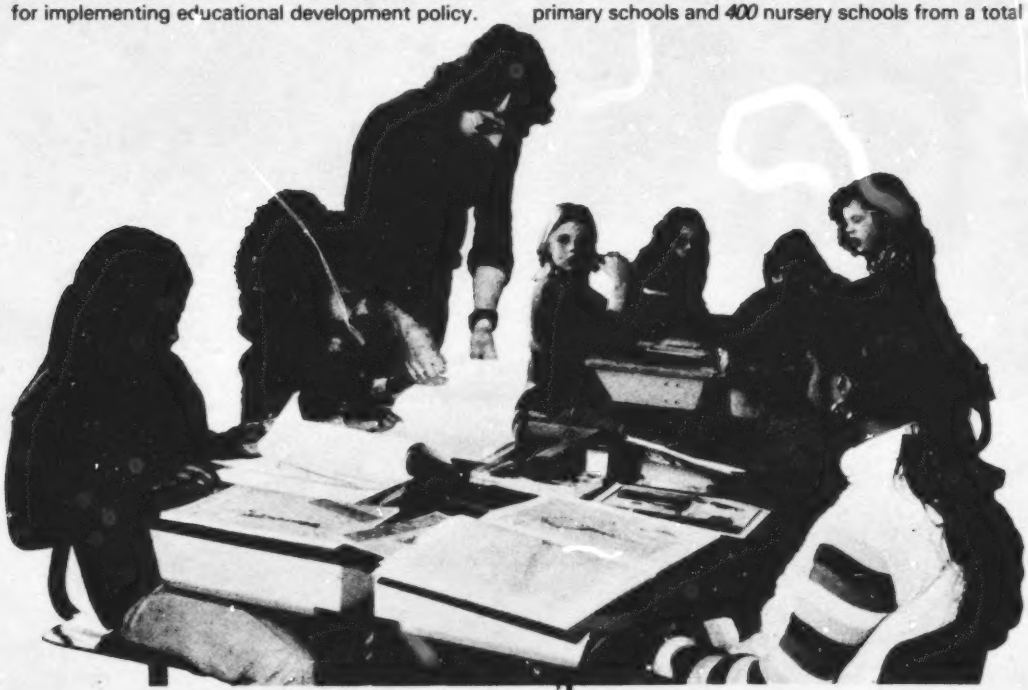
educational development policy in the Netherlands

Schools which have a lot of children who, because of the environment in which they grow up, find it difficult to keep pace and therefore often get left behind, are now being given a boost in the Netherlands. Extra attention and if necessary extra money will be given to the schools where these children are in the majority, to give the children the chance to prove that they do not belong at the bottom of the class. Pulling these groups of children out of the situation in which they quite unjustly find themselves is a priority of the present government led by Mr J. den Uyl, the Prime Minister. Dr J.A. van Kemenade, Minister of Education and Science and Mr H.W. van Doorn, Minister of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work are jointly responsible for implementing educational development policy.

In 1974 the memorandum "Policy Memorandum on Education for Deprived Groups" was submitted to Parliament.

An Educational Development Steering Group (STOS) is responsible for organising activities and generally seeing to it that policy is carried out. The educational development steering group is interdepartmental.

At the same time as the policy memorandum was published a start was made on implementing the policy, building upon activities which were already going on along the same lines in schools, families and neighbourhoods. The results of this in the school year 1976/1977 will be that fourteen to fifteen hundred primary schools from a total of *8500* primary schools and *400* nursery schools from a total



of 7300 nursery schools will have full-time or part-time extra teachers. More than half of these schools with extra teachers (priority schools) are supported by the school support centres. The 18 support centres involved in this work were allocated 32 extra members of staff mainly to set up, work out and implement the development packages.
Five regions, the town of Groningen, the eastern mining region in the province of Limburg, south east Drenthe, Helmond and The Hague have already been designated as development projects. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work (CRM) cooperate closely in this area complementing each other to help these deprived groups.
'It is the first policy plan for educational development. I don't know if it is going to be a success exactly in the way we think. We shall have to see. In any event I think we have to make a start based on the ideas we have and an attempt must be made to set it all up as effectively as possible. Opportunities have to be offered to these groups — positive discrimination — who have had too little benefit from education that we have, after all, provided for everyone. This is the first time that it has been approached systematically.' Dr. Van Kemenade said these words and the rest of the quotations in this article are also from his statements at a public meeting of the permanent committee for education of the Second Chamber on 14 April 1975.

Deprivation

It is generally accepted and many investigations have established the fact that in the Netherlands, too, because of economic and social circumstances there are population groups whose children, independent of their personal suitability, get less benefit than others from the amenities which have been provided by the community for all children to allow them to grow and develop in the best possible way. This applies both to rural areas and to large towns with districts or neighbourhoods which are clearly lagging behind.
'Deprivation means that a number of groups in our society have far fewer opportunities, economic, social and cultural, than others . . . The effect of this on children is not that they are worse than others but that they are disadvantaged through lack of equal chances of development in the environments and groups in which they are born. This is not the fault of the parents or their own fault but the fault of the way society is composed and the way opportunities are distributed which in their case just happens to be worse than for others'.
In anticipation of the intended reforms in education which will provide all children with equal opportunities to develop to the full, educational development policy is directed at providing extra opportunities in the existing situation — positive discrimination — for those children who, even given the fact that they are equally suitable, would be incapable of achieving the same results. To make do with working on educational reform and to wait simply for it to be introduced cannot be justified in view of the large groups which are clearly deprived at the moment.

Inside and outside school

The obstacles for these children are both inside and outside school. It is generally accepted that the difficulties inside school are caused to a large extent by the situation outside school. The detrimental effect of deprivation out of school becomes worse the more the school does not or cannot take it into account.

'This is why it is so important that the school and the welfare sector, all the organisations and people in a particular district concerned with supporting, helping and making people more aware of their situation, must work as closely together as possible so that there is interaction between them'.

Close cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work is therefore one of the first requirements. The same kind of interaction between the causes of deprivation in and out of school will have to be created between the activities of the two ministries, both of which have their area of reference marked out for them, the one in school the other outside the school, although both are responsible for promoting the well-being of the entire population. The activities of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work which have direct points of contact with education are, for example, reception classes for children under four, general social work, work with children and young people, neighbourhood work, educational community development work, amateur cultural activities, lectures and adult education.

Interdepartmental cooperation will have to be reflected in local practice. The Open School and the Educational Network are other examples of cooperation between the two ministries.

Family and environment

Features of the environmental situation outside the school which cause children with normal ability to lag behind at school are usually:

— the social and economic situation of the family and environment (district, neighbourhood, village, region) to which the family belongs;

— the parents' experiences of school, which result in the children having an indifferent attitude to school;

— another use of language and another way of thinking which in itself need not be detrimental but provides an inadequate link with the education given at school;

— the individual way of life and living conditions of the family which restrict children's opportunities of studying, such as lack of suitable facilities for homework;

— lack of social contacts which are conducive to educational achievement: for example the possession and use of books, telephone, making trips, participating in cultural activities.

Because of these factors there is a short circuit between school and environment because the education provided is usually geared to the average (the middle class), especially where use of language, way of life and way of thinking, educational approach, and cultural, social and even financial assumptions are concerned.

The objective of educational development policy is to avoid this short-circuiting by giving extra attention and taking extra measures for the pupils in the schools from these backgrounds. People are generally convinced that in the long run this will not be successful unless in addition to the special attention in school an attempt is made to do everything to improve the environmental climate and as far as possible to eliminate the factors which lead to these situations.

'It is important for education to work better; for the teacher to know what the problems in the district are and that the parents know that the school isn't just there to pass on completely vague and abstract ideas; but that these vague and abstract things like arithmetic, language, history may have something to do with what is going on in real life in the district, neighbourhood, village. In this way the school can become much more open, and there will not only be familiarity between the environment in school and out of school, so that people get support from both sides but it will also be possible for the school to latch on more easily to the experiences of the children thus enabling them to learn better'.

Lines of Communication

What we do not want to do is to use education to remove children from their backgrounds. It is a question of using education, closely interwoven with activities in the community development sector, gradually to eliminate deprivation. Libraries for children under four, work with young people in neighbourhood centres and clubs for example are an attempt at achieving social and cultural enrichment. They will only come into their own if there are open communication lines between them and the school. They are on the one hand extensions of education and on the other they also form points of access to the school. The first and probably the most difficult task for development policy will be to bring about these open communication lines between the two sectors where people do not operate only according to their officially designated roles but also are distinguished according to their training and approach to the work.

In setting up the development projects which is the ultimate aim of this policy, teachers and social workers will have to be thoroughly aware of the need to cooperate. They will have to understand the different kind of work which the other is doing, the ways of doing it and professional idiosyncracies.

How should development activities be carried out?

The goal of development policy can be given by quoting from the Policy Memorandum:
'. . . by taking such measures in schools and in relation to education in general so that the lack of educational opportunities for children from underprivileged backgrounds is eliminated or reduced, so that these children not only formally but also in fact get the same educational chances as children from more privileged homes'.
The measures which are applied jointly and in cooperation with the two ministries concerned can be divided into three categories:
1. activities directed at educational improvements in the school:
— assignment of extra teachers on condition that there are educational reforms;
— relieving the school team of some duties, by allocating teachers' aides;
— intensification of the support offered by the school support centres;
— inservice training for teachers;
— allocation of extra teaching aids.
2. activities which are geared to welfare work within the school:
— visits to pupils' homes and parents evenings with groups of parents.
3. welfare activities outside the school:
— activities for children under four;
— social and cultural work for children and parents;
— educational community development work.

Conditions

The allocation of extra resources is tied to certain conditions:
— accepting in principle the help of a school support centre within a reasonable distance of the school and participation in the development programme to be arranged by the centres;
— that the extra resources must be seen and used as an extension of the work of the school as part of more individual aid to pupils and improvement and reform of education and not as a way of relieving teachers of their present duties;
— development activities must serve ultimately to bring about the total reform of the education system. For this cooperation in innovatory activities and in scientifically based evaluation of the results achieved by the development policy is necessary.
These measures are completely or partially applied depending on what shape development takes.
a. **development projects** in which activities in and out of the school are completely integrated for a geographically defined area;
b. **development packages** which are offered by the school support centre to a certain number of eligible schools within its catchment area;
c. **development schools**, these are schools which are eligible for extra resources whether they fall within the working area of development packages or development projects or not.

The development schools

It is precisely at a young age that environmental influences have their most penetrating and definitive effect. As a result of restricted funds and not enough expert manpower a choice had to be made, and was made, for concentrating on nursery and primary education. The main reasons were:

— if children lag behind at nursery and primary school this determines their further school career and their future life;

— this situation which is tied up with the environment can best be tackled and improved at as early a stage as possible;

— educational development in the first place is not only intended to make it possible for more children to go on to secondary education or higher education, but especially to enable them to get more out of the education which they have at present.

Occupational groups

In principle all schools which can show that at least half of the pupils constantly get left behind by comparison with the average educational achievement of children in schools in the Netherlands, are eligible for extra resources. There are various methods of measuring the deprivation, such as for example school achievement in terms of reports and examination marks, the number of children going on to further education. Provisionally the occupational group of the parents has been chosen as a yardstick because there is insufficient data and experience of other perhaps even better standards. In establishing the occupational group of the parents 11 categories are used:

1. unemployed
2. invalid
3. academic or managerial professions
4. middle grade occupations
5. clerical or service sector occupations
6. skilled workers
7. semi-skilled or unskilled workers
8. agricultural workers
9. self-employed trades-people
10. farmers
11. no permanent occupation.

In making the calculations the groups 1, 2, 7, 8 and 11 will be taken as determining factors in establishing deprivation.

Other circumstances

The occupational group of the parents is, of course, not the only yardstick which has been taken into consideration to determine the degree of deprivation. Circumstances such as the following were also taken into account in detail:

— isolated location of the school (the Wadden Islands);

— shortage of special schools;

— many pupils from Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles (Bijlmer);

— many pupils from one-parent families or broken homes;

— the readiness of the school to work constructively on educational improvements and reforms;

— the location of the school within an area which has already been designated as a development area for other reasons (economic, social).

Initiative

The school must take the initiative to submit an application to be considered as a development school, but it need not always be the school board alone that does this. Both teachers and parents and any other organisations and bodies connected with the school can be involved. The application must be submitted by the school board to the ministry. After the application has been granted (a process in which the education inspectorates play an important part) the school can make claims to the resources for which it is eligible.

Development packages

There are also extra resources for the school support centres which are involved in the activities for the development schools. The school support centres acquire an extra member of staff for every twenty development schools. This extra member of staff can be a new employee or those already working for the service can be reallocated new duties. A condition of this is that a cooperative agreement exists between the schools and the school support centres.

Development projects

A development project comprises a geographical area in which the education sector and social work sector cooperate in every possible way in existing activities or activities still to be developed. These projects in which it is ascertained how education and social work can best work together are provisionally still experimental. The choice of an area is made according to the following:

— the number of schools in the area which will be designated as development schools (provisionally 40 is being used as the norm);

— the scope of the community development work in the area or the recognised need for it;

— the presence and the quality of school support centres and social work organisations;

— the presence in the area of other development activities in other sectors (economic, employment provisions, etc.);

— the readiness of all those involved to really help in the development project.

An extra member of staff can be attached as a development coordinator to school support centres which work on a development project. For the social work sector a welfare coordinator is then also appointed. The two coordinators work together, complementing each other, and are responsible for the development project. They are also the project

If you wish to receive additional information about educational development policy write to:
The Secretariat,
Inter-Ministerial Educational Development Steering Group (STOS),
Nieuwe Uitleg 1,
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leaders. In order to ensure that there is effective interaction between the two a national contact point for development policy has been set up.
Up to now on the recommendation of the STOS steering group five development projects have been designated and a start has already been made towards their realisation, based on development activities which were previously under way.
The following projects have been designated:
Groningen (the town) where there is already a project (A2) under way in which education and social work are cooperating. The municipal authority which is conducting an urban renewal project and the state university in Groningen are prepared to assist;
The eastern mining region with 33 development schools already and the Special Development Work Organisation for the coordination of social work, partly taking into account that this region is already an area destined for economic restructuring;
Helmond, a slum-ridden inner city with major social and economic problems where the regional school support centre already has 36 development schools in its catchment area, 20 of which are in the town of Helmond itself and the local and regional welfare organisation is involved in the project;
Drenthe, where there are 60 development schools, 26 of which are in the municipality of Emmen in the south eastern corner where the project will be specially concentrated with Emmen, Odoorn, Hoogeveen and Sleen as target points;
The Hague, of the large towns only The Hague has been designated because there are already 69 development schools recognised there but there have not been any projects introduced up to now as in the other large cities, such as the Grandia project in Rotterdam and the Calcar project in Amsterdam.
If funds permit and there is enough available manpower, and keeping in mind that a proper national distribution should be aimed at, other projects will be set up on the basis of recommendations which have already been made by the STOS steering group.

In addition to the development schools and the development projects there are also special measures for schools in urban renewal areas and for schools with a large proportion of or many children of foreign workers (migrant workers).
Educational development policy is ultimately directed at consolidating and expanding the number of development packages and projects. The size of the number of schools eligible cannot be established automatically and will depend very much on spontaneous applications from the schools themselves. Probably by no means all the schools which are eligible will have submitted their names.
As far as development projects are concerned 20 or so are being considered for major concentrations of schools in which deprivation can be said to exist.
The policy will gradually have to acquire a definite shape through further scientific analysis and evaluation of the experiences in the first development phase, a stage in which the cooperation between education and social work will have to be given plenty of attention.

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